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INEXPLICATA is the official journal of the **Institute of Hispanic Ufology**, an organization dedicated to increasing and promoting information and awareness on UFO and paranormal research in Spain, the Caribbean, Central and South America.

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Ufology At A Standstill?

So...this is what the year 2000 feels like...

Certainly an anticlimactic sensation, as one could have well expected last year as we put together the last issue of INEXPLICATA for the Nineties. Perhaps the anticlimax is due to the incredible amount of activity--dare I say excitement?--that ufology experienced between 1988 and 1998. From the Matrix-induced furor of Lear, Cooper and Bennewitz to the Alien Autopsy and the 50th anniversary of Roswell, the embarrassing discipline known as ufology burned the candle at both ends in a party that never seemed to end. One aspect of research gave way to another with the same ease as fashion trends: we went from secret underground bases to public discussion of abduction phenomena, then onto Roswell and the government's plethora of excuses and explanations on the subject, and finally to the "neo-skeptical" era of questioning everything that the preceding years had put forth. At the end, we paid our bill, tipped the check-room attendant, and stumbled into the daybreak of a new reality.

Commercial interests strip-mined ufology from cereal (a box of *UFOS* every morning) to serial (the conspiracy-haunted *X-Files*) to the point that the public at large no longer cares...or even wants to hear the subject mentioned. The ultimate consequences will not be felt until later this decade, and the disappearance of many UFO related publications as forums for information and discussion represents an alarming trend.

In this issue, Pablo Villarubia pursues one of the scariest UFO cases of all time while two new members of the INEXPLICATA team -- José Manuel Durán and Dr. Roque Mecoli -- give us their viewpoints on the UFO phenomenon. Contributing Editor Manuel Carballal explores the military/UFO connection and we interview Dr. Rafael Lara Palmeros.

As always, enjoy the ride. And don't forget to tip the check-room attendant, will you?

Scott Corrales
Editor, INEXPLICATA
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World traveller and explorer Pablo Villarubia once again graces the pages of INEXPLICATA with his presence--this time as he goes behind one of the most sensational UFO cases in South America and interviews original witnesses to the event.

The Incredible Saga of Joao Prestes

by Pablo Villarubia Mauso

In 1946, almost a year prior to the famous incident at Mt. Rainier (USA) which heralded the start of the modern UFO age, a farmer died in a most hideous fashion in Brazil's back country. Within a matter of hours, a strange light had brought about the death of Joao Prestes Filho by intense burns, according to some witnesses, or as a result of his flesh falling off from the bones, leaving bones and tendons exposed--as others would claim.

The answer to one of the most disconcerting and horrifying cases in the history of ufology started in the small, noisome "Minas Gerais" hotel where historian/ufologist Claudio Tsuyoshi Suenaga and I had lodged in order to research several alleged Chupacabras attacks in the region. We were in the town of Sao Roque--47 kilometers away from the city of Sao Paulo (Brazil) when my roommate called my attention, breaking the silence of night, to the pages of a newspaper he had found in the room's grimy bathroom.

With a mixture of ecstasy and emotion, stumbling over words, the young Japanese-Brazilian read out the paper's contents, dated April 12, 1997: "The esteemed Roque Prestes died at 91 years of age on April 6th, at his home in this city,...he was the brother of Joao Prestes (deceased)..." To our astonishment, we had stumbled onto the trail of the parents of Joao Prestes Filho, the man who died a terrible death on March 4th, 1946: after having been attacked by an unexplained light, his flesh began to fall off his bones in chunks, especially off his jaw, chest, hands, fingers, and feet, dooming him to die within a matter of hours. To the horror and helplessness of onlookers, some pieces of flesh remained dangling from his tendons.

The Hotel Minas Gerais was the mute witness to our insomnia and restlessness until dawn, when we contacted a son of the late Roque Prestes by phone. In a matter of minutes and at brisk pace, we reached the modest home of sixty year-old Luis Prestes on the outskirts of Sao Roque. Luis was still in mourning for the recent death of his father, Roque -- a former soldier of the constitutionalist revolution of 1932.

"Up to very recently, shortly before his death, my father recalled his brother's tragic passing on that distant year 1946. I was small--some 9 years old--but I clearly remember what happened to my uncle Joao. It was carnival week and Joao, who loathed such festivities, decided to go fishing and drove off in his cart. He lived in Araçariçuama, a little village only 7 kilometers away from San Roque and a hitherto isolated and quiet community. My aunt went off to the festivities with the children

and left Joao's supper already made at home." Luis Prestes would explain as we looked on attentively.

"I was in Araçariguama when I learned that my uncle was dying at a relatives house. I wanted to go in, but it was forbidden, since I was too young and Joao's physical condition could have caused a traumatic impression. My father did see him, and Joao told him that upon returning home and opening the window, something resembling fire or a "fiery torch" entered the room in which he was standing. He fell to the floor and felt that his body was on fire. Wrapping himself in a blanket, he walked over two kilometers into the village. My father said that Joao was only burned from the waist up, with the exception of the hair on his head. I managed to see my uncle when they removed him from the house to take him to Santana do Parnaíba by truck, where the nearest hospital was located. I remember that the sheets covering him were blackened, perhaps by the burns on his body. Joao died shortly before being admitted to the hospital." Prestes related as we caught his account on tape.

"A number of books published in English, Japanese and even Russian have said tha Joao Prestes died in a hideous manner, with pieces of his body, such as his ears or parts of his face, melting off. Is this true?" I asked.

"No. His appearance, according to my father, who escorted him to the hospital, was truly ruinous, but it wasn't that extreme. He had serious burns all over his body. His flesh was dark and he presented no bodily injuries," explained our interviewee, making partial changes to the story which had appeared in books and hundreds of articles published on the case. "My father was a deputy policeman at Santana de Parnaíba and requested the assistance of the forensic unit to research the case, but I don't know anything about the results. The fact is that nothing burned in the room where Jose was when the fire appeared. He had no enemies or anyone who'd be interested in doing such a thing to him. Even as he died, he repeated that the light had attacked him and that it was "otherworldly"," explained our interviewee. The following item of information brought us back to reality with a start. " Back then, people would constantly see fireballs known as "assombrações" (ghosts) in Araçariguama and its vicinity. Some believed they came from the gold mine that's now closed. Other weird things would happen, too. My late father told us that around 1922 he was able to see a *lobisomem* (wolf-man) while with my grandfather and an uncle. My uncle apparently threw a rock at it and hit its hand. The next day, a neighbor turned up with his hand bandaged. Other people told similar stories," Luis Prestes informed us. The idea that that the Sao Roque area could be some fantastic "window area" through which an astonishing variety and quantity of anomalous phenomena jelled in our minds.

The theory seemed to match the following data imparted by our informer. "Something equally scary happened to Emiliano Prestes, my uncle and Joao Prestes' brother. A few months after his brother's tragic death, Emiliano was walking through an Araçariguama forest, in Agua Podre--the same one from which the lobisomen appeared in 1922 and where the light burned Joao. A fiery torch appeared above him, causing the terrified Emiliano

to run to a canyon's edge when the thing fell on him. All he could do was kneel and pray for his life. He told us that he felt an intense heat, but luckily, the fiery torch moved away and vanished." Luis's account added even further mysteries to the area.

The "fiery torch" or "fireball" was also seen on several occasions by Luis's father. The object would frighten horses and riders alike as they made their way through Araçariguama's dark nights to reach their humble abodes. "The lights were seen most frequently between 3 and 4 in the morning, and were three or four times larger than the Moon. People would feel their heat even at a distance, and they were able to move amazingly fast. My father stopped going to parties at night because of these lights," Luis Prestes recalled.

Further Aggressions

Before ending our interview, feeling satisfied by the new information shedding light on the Joao Prestes case, just as we were thinking to add nothing further to the proceedings, Luis Prestes gave us a valuable clue: the possible existence of the last witness have seen Joao's dying moments. "He's an elderly gentleman, but very lucid and strong. He lives close to my neighborhood in San Roque. This is his address."

We immediately headed toward the residence of Vergílio Francisco Alves. Upon reaching it, his daughter advised us that her father was working in the fields in front of the house, clearing vegetation with a scythe. After some time had elapsed, Vergílio appeared. To our surprise, he produced his identity card proving his 92 years of existence in full health.

Seated on a threadbare sofa in his modest home, Vergílio explained that he was Joao Prestes's second cousin. "I was born and raised in Araçariguama. That's where I began working in the Morro Velho gold mine at the age of 15 or 16. There was a British engineer who couldn't write my name and called me *garoto de ouro* ("golden boy"). But I'll tell you what I know about the horrible death of Joao Prestes. It was in 1946 during the carnival season. He went fishing in the nearby Tieté River, riding in his cart, while the wife and children went to the festivities. It was the dry season and there was no rain. When he got back, he stabled his horse and fed it some corn. He put the fish in a pot and heated some water with firewood to take a bath. When he changed clothing, a sort of beam of light or yellow light had appeared in his room. He felt his body burning and that his beard, while short, was burning. Panicked, and unable to move his hands, Joao raised the door latch using his teeth and ran into the street barefoot, since he never wore shoes. He ran screaming to his sister Maria's house, near the Araçariguama church. He dropped on a bed and said he'd been burned. The police chief, Joao Malaquias, went over immediately, who told him there was no one to blame for what had happened, because his attacker "had not been of this world". This was followed by lightning and thunder, and a powerful rainstorm..."

This part of Vergílio's story reminded me of the Varghina

case, which occurred in 1997 in Minas Gerais. A rainstorm the likes of which had never been seen in Varghina occurred after the appearance and alleged capture of one or more supposedly alien creatures. Significant atmospheric changes tend to occur in "fortean" cases.

"So, you were able to see Joao Prestes on his deathbed?" Claudio Suegana asked Vergílio Alves.

"Yes. My cousin Emiliano Prestes, who was my neighbor, called me over. When I got to Maria's house, I found Joao Malaquias, the sheriff, speaking with Joao. He was in bed and having problems using his tongue. His skin, which was fair, was toasted, reddish, as if he'd been roasted. His hands and face had the worst burns. The hands were twisted. His hair didn't burn, nor did his feet nor clothing. He was only burned from the waist up. His feet were torn up from running barefoot on sharp rocks.

"Did you see Joao's flesh falling off in pieces at any time?" I inquired.

"No, no. His skin was burned, but it wasn't falling off. I think that the *boitatá* was to blame, since it had attacked him once before," Vergílio told us. Claudio and I exchanged looks of stupefaction as the lucid nonogenarian imparted his information.

"Please tell us about this other incident," we said, almost in unison.

"Well, when Joao was a *tropero* (cattle driver), he was still young and lived with his father in Araçariguama. One day at sundown, as he lead the donkeys over a hill, he saw a fire that fell from the sky--a fireball. He was near a chapel that had a cross, and he could feel the fireball passing him, almost knocking him down. Joao would tell me that at that spot you could sometimes see ten or twelve balls emerging from the sky. Some of them were red, others Moon-colored. Sometimes five or six of them would fall to the ground and explode. People would call them the *boitatá* lights..." Vergílio explained.

I would like to digress to explain that the word "*boitatá*" is of native origin and designated mysterious lights that would pursue and even kill the native indians, according to Portuguese colonial chronicles and the stories of Canarian priest José de Anchieta in the 16th century.

Vergílio himself witnessed the apparition of one of these lights, which emerged from behind the mountain where the gold mine was and landed on Mt. Saboao, another hill where strange lights always appear. "We also called those fireballs *maes do ouro* (mothers of gold). There was also the "golden lizard", an elongated tongue of flame that moved in a straight line, slowly, without making a sound."

The mysterious Morro Velho gold mine is currently abandoned. Canadian general George Raston, who founded the mine in 1926, lived there until it was closed in the late 1930's.

While we ate some delicious plantains grown by Vergílio on his own farm, he told us that wolf-men had also been seen in Araçariguama, thus confirming the information provided by Luis Prestes.

"Who took Joao to the hospital?" I asked Vergílio in order to resume and finish our interview on the case.

"Malaquias, the sheriff, wanted to take him to a hospital in Sao Paulo, but the road was in bad shape and they went to Santana do Parnaíba. An investigation was requested from the police but no answer was found for the case. They only said that nothing had burned in Joao's house, since some had said that he had burned himself with a candlestick.

On the Road to Araçariguama

Still stunned by the new information in our possession about the Prestes case, we got on the only bus that makes the trip between Sao Roque and Araçariguama. Since 1946, when it was a village without electricity, running water and sewerage, Araçariguama hadn't grown much and poisonous snakes were still abundant. It is one of the region's oldest towns and has 7000 residents. It was founded some 350 years ago, and was home to the *bandeirantes*, the conquerors of Brazil's vast interior.

According to a report published in the 1960's by the late Dr. Walter Bühler, the police condemned Joao Prestes's house and it was later demolished, since his family was apparently afraid to return to the house, perhaps considered an accursed location.

In Araçariguama we met with Fabiana Matias de Oliveira, head press secretary for the small township, and she led us to her uncle Hermes de Fonseca, nearly 70 years old and deeply knowledgeable about the history of the region and its occupants. As is the case with many Brazilians of his age, he continued working to earn a living, making small improvements to a farm close to the Town Hall. Hermes sat on a tree stump and told us about his life, his arrival in Araçariguama in 1945 and the fact that a rattlesnake had bitten his ankle--a scar he showed us proudly.

"I knew Joao Prestes. I remember the date of his death perfectly--it was March 5th, 1946. He left behind five or six children and a widow. I never got to see the body--only a few people did. But they said that it was burned. The press would later say that his body had melted, fallen to pieces," the septuagenarian told us.

"Weird things have always occurred here. A year after Joao's death, his brother Emiliano Prestes saw two fireballs rising and striking each other, rising again and repeating the same action, close to the cemetery. Suddenly the lights encircled him and he felt intense heat. He knelt and prayed until the lights left. Even today you can still see these lights, but with less intensity, over at Ibaté, between Araçariguama and Sao Roque. When they strike each other they let

sparks fly, but don't disintegrate. Giomar Gouveia, a champion jockey and owner of some stables at Ibaté, saw a light hovering over his animals, giving off orange beams of light. This was in 1995." Hermes da Fonseca recalled.

Enthused by our interest, Hermes continued, remembering dates and details worthy of his appointment as the "official chronicler" of Araçariguama. "In 1960, Celso Gomide, a bus driver, was on his way from Sao Roque when he saw a red light that caused him to stop the vehicle. The light approached the cabin and Gomide, frightened, began to pray. The passengers were stunned by the uncanny light, which encircled them for some 20 minutes."

"In 1955," he continued, "I worked on the construction of a cable car in the Santa Rita cement factory. It was supposed to be used to transport rock from a local quarry. It was August 24th of that year and the heat was unbearable when myself and other workers saw an object drifting in the blue sky as large as a truck tire, very tall, aluminum-colored, spinning and giving off smoke--circles of white smoke. We saw it at a quarter past eleven, and by twelve o'clock, five or six FAB (Brazilian Air Force) airplanes arrived. They were smaller than the flying wheel, which distanced itself easily from the planes. On the following day, the "Folha de Sao Paulo" newspaper published an article about the fact that thousands of people in Osasco (near Araçariguama) had seen a flying saucer with the same characteristics."

Less than a kilometer away from the town is the graveyard. We found the local gravedigger, 53 year old Nelson Oliveira, who led us to the tomb where the mortal remains of Joao Prestes lay. On the cement box covered by earth there rose a crudely carved cross and an identification number. Claudio and I felt knots in our throats as we thought about the last moments of Joao Prestes' agony. Regaining our composure, we asked Nelson, who had been a gravedigger since 1976, if he had seen anything strange in the area.

"Around 1989 I saw something weird, round, flying over the cemetery. It was like an upside-down hat made of aluminum, shining when it moved in a straight line and balancing. It was headed toward Sao Paulo," the gravedigger told us, using his own hat as an example.

During a personal interview with ufologist Antonio Ribera in Barcelona, he expressed the belief that Joao Prestes could have been burned by an alien ship's propulsion system. "I don't think the aliens wanted to harm or kill the farmer. They simply didn't know what would happen if they came too close to human beings," Ribera said.

We had much time to reflect upon the tragic death of Joao Prestes Filho as a ramshackle bus took us away from Araçariguama. "What do you think the light that killed Prestes was?" I asked Claudio. "Maybe ball lightning," he replied. "But, how can one explain the other lights and creatures in the region?" I insisted.

Claudio Suenaga said nothing. He shrugged and cast a last glance on the church tower of that accursed village.

The Prestes Case: A Study in UFO Intrigue

The Joao Prestes Case only became known internationally as of September 1971, when ufologist Irineu Silveira announced the possible connection between the farmer's death and the UFO phenomenon during the 2nd Symposium on Extraterrestrial Life, held in Sao Paulo.

A number of investigators examined the case. Walter Buhler, one of Brazil's best known ufologists, believed that Prestes' burns were attributable to a candlestick. However, the majority begged to differ, accusing Böhler of belonging to the "angelical" party of ufology--the side that preaches that ETs have come to Earth to do good rather than harm. Others, such as premier ufologist Fernando Grossman, were able to interview direct witnesses to the case in 1974, such as former apprentice orderly Aracy Gomide. Based on information supplied by Gomide, Grossman and physician Luiz Braga reached the conclusion that Prestes' burns resembled "the indirect effects of a nuclear explosion, as occurred with certain victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Radiation affected living cells but not the dead ones, such as hair and the fabric of clothing. But, who in 1946 would have had a directed beam of powerful atomic particles anywhere near Aracaruama?

"It's not an isolated case," Grossman commented during an interview he granted me in Sao Paulo. "There are many parallels between his death and others which occurred in the state of Pará (Brazilian Amazonia) in the late '70s and early '80s. The researcher pointed out that on the day of Prestes' death, an Aracaruama councilman named Alencar Martins Gonçalves saw a "fireball" near the cemetery.

Gomide's statements were internationally echoed and the majority of the articles appearing in books, magazines and bulletins based the Prestes Case on this witness exclusively. Much of the information provided by the former orderly does not appear to coincide with the recollections of Luis and Roque Prestes and Vergílio Francisco Alves. According to Gomide, Joao, upon returning from fishing, jumped through a window to get into his house, given that his wife had locked the door upon leaving. It was at that moment that he would have seen the intense light that burned him. Gomide, who had worked as an Army orderly, was asked to care for Joao Prestes, with whom he held conversations during the latter's 6 to 9 hour agony.

The orderly disclosed that the flesh fell off the victim's arms, leaving exposed bones and tendons without any indication of pain. The most affected bodily parts were the face and arms, but without presenting any darkening--rather decomposition, an explanation that doesn't jibe with the ones given by Luis Prestes and Virgilio. On the other hand, all three accounts coincide in that Joao's shirt and trousers, as well as his hair, remained intact.

Claudio Suenaga managed to recover Joao Prestes' death certificate from the Bureau of Vital Statistics and Notary of Santana de Parnaíba. Gomide stated that Prestes had died between three and four o'clock in the morning on March 6, when in fact, the event occurred on March 4 at 22:00 hours and not on the 5th as was hitherto believed. Physician Luiz Caligiuri indicated the cause of death in the document as "cardiac collapse, generalized 1st and 2nd degree burns." Joao's age was believed to be 39, but the document indicates 44 years of age at the time of death.

São Roque, Santana do Parnaíba y Araçariguama: Window Areas?

The region surrounding São Roque, Santana do Parnaíba, Araçariguama and other towns neighboring one of the most densely populated cities on Earth (São Paulo, with its 18 million inhabitants) has been the scene of unusual phenomena for many years.

The "Supysáua" Newsletter (March '95), published by the Grupo Ufológico de Guarujá reported that three children had witnessed a glowing UFO on January 4, 1994 in Santana de Parnaíba, where Joao Prestes died. The object approached the backyard of the home in question and floated less than 15 meters over the witnesses. Its color was largely yellow and it possessed sparkling green and red lights. What was remarkable was that within the yellow light, the children could make out a semi-circular shape resembling a dome. The children were startled by the UFOs abrupt, zigzagging movements as it departed at high speed.

In that same year and region, a married couple witnessed from the "Lila" ranch on Km 41 of Castelo Branco highway a spherical object measuring three meters in diameter which floated between the trees and made no sound whatsoever. It was red in color and was darker at its core. Its periphery was surrounded by several smaller, blinking lights, alternating between blue and red.

In 1993, a 12-year old girl named Regiane Barbosa da Silva witnessed on the same ranch a spherical object measuring some 5 meters in diameter. The UFO suddenly fired a beam of yellow light that covered the girl's body and lit the surrounding area. After the event, Regiane experienced headaches and eye irritation. Three months later, another witness spotted the same object at the same spot. The watchmen of the "Lila" ranch claim having seen two humanoids floating over a brook on the ranch's property.

An elderly Japanese woman who spent her youth in Santana de Parnaíba told Suenaga that she had seen a half-wolfman, half-centaur being in the vicinity of Sítio do Morro. São Roque has also experienced one of the most intense waves of Chupacabras activity in all of South America.

<i>There are more details to certain classic UFO cases than ever</i>
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make it into most magazines. This is certainly the case with the equally famous case involving young Brazilian farmer Antonio Villas Boas...and those who followed him.

An Alien Heat: Chronicles of Sex and Saucery

by Scott Corrales

It is an unquestionable fact that sex has played a pivotal role in a number of UFO cases and has become the mainstay of the abduction phenomenon, whose literature centers around the non-consensual aspect of these goings-on. But these are merely the latest facet of a phenomenon that goes back to the very start of human history and myth. Who can forget the Greek gods and the numerous guises they assumed to seduce humans? But the Mediterranean cultures were hardly alone in their beliefs. Hindu deities were equally proficient at seduction: the Bhaghavata Purana tells us of the exploits of the divine Krishna with mortal milkmaids. Hardly a culture in the Americas lacks a story concerning a sky maiden who fell to earth, married a mortal, and then returned to her people after having had offspring.

The notion of sexual congress has also played heavily in science fiction and other speculative writing as far back as Edgar Rice Burroughs's *John Carter of Mars* stories, where the human hero fights all manner of alien beings on the Red Planet and wins the affections of the alien princess Deja Thoris (Burroughs's Martians were oviparous, so in the course of time, we can imagine that Carter's alien lover laid an egg).

The Case to End All Cases: Antonio Villas Boas

Many researchers and writers have agreed that should it be necessary to sum up ufology in a single case, the one involving the strange experience of Brazilian farmer Antonio Villas Boas would more than likely be the one to choose.

Veteran Brazilian ufologist Fernando Cleto reminisces about the surreal days of this most unusual case: "...as friend of Joao Martins, I already knew enough about the event in his own words. On one occasion, I read letters written by Villas Boas and even managed to see a small model of the "flying saucer" and one of its occupants--small rustic statuettes whittled out of wood by Villas Boas himself. I also recall that Joao Martins was completely opposed to making this case known to the public, and for this reason it was disclosed much later[...] after Dna. Irene Granchi made it known overseas. I published my own opinion in this regard in a Belgian or British magazine--I can't remember which. I made an observation which greatly favored the Villas Boas case."

As if the incredible AVB required further bolstering, Fernando Cleto managed to show that there had indeed been sightings of the same elongated oval vehicle elsewhere in Brazil

prior to the date of the events in the AVB case.

"I remember," says Cleto, "that a few days prior to October 15, 1957, there occurred a case in the interior of the State of Goiás. A car was forced off the road by a force issuing from a "flying saucer". The driver described something that bore a strong connection to what Villas Boas had seen. At first, he compared the UFO to a helicopter having the power to exert traction...and to have witnessed occupants similar to those seen by Villas Boas himself. There is no doubt that on November 6, 1957, Colonel Ivo Gastaldoni, who was on the way to the hospital to see his newly-born daughter, was summoned by his commander to see a UFO hovering directly over the Cumbica Air Base. The colonel remarked that the object was high up in the air and well out of the base's fighters' reach. His overall impression was that it resembled some sort of egg-shaped craft with a helicopter blade spinning above the ovoid fuselage.

"When added to the November 6 case," writes Cleto. "The event involving the driver before October 15, 1957 coincided with the description given by Villas Boas for his own object, which impressed me greatly. It was as if a certain model of UFO carrying a very special crew complement had been operating in a particular region of Brazil for a given period of time, engaged in a special mission."

Ufologist Cleto's memorandum regarding the AVB case notes that Joao Martins' reluctance to disclose the particulars of the astonishing AVB event was to keep mentally unbalanced individuals from conjuring up similar scenarios.

But what exactly happened to Antonio Villas Boas?

The deposition taken by investigator Dr. Olavo T. Fontes and subsequently delivered to Brazil's Ministry of the Navy remains the cornerstone of research into the case. It was taken in Fontes' office on February 22, 1958 and witnessed by journalist Martins himself.

Villas Boas began by stating that he was 23 years old at the time and was a farmer by profession. He lived on a *fazenda* (ranch) on the outskirts of Sao Francisco de Sales, Minas Gerais, not far from Sao Paulo, and came from a large family consisting of two brothers and three sisters who all lived in the immediate area. The young farmer explained that it was their custom to work two shifts during the planting season: one at night, which was his responsibility, and another by day which was handled by farmhands.

On October 5, 1957, Villas Boas went to bed at 11:00 p.m. after a party at the farmhouse. He shared the room with his younger brother Joao, and they both witnessed a strange nocturnal light that lit up the entire room, and had its source in one of the animal pens on the farm.

It was ten days later--on October 15--that Antonio Villas Boas would have his historic experience. While driving his tractor, he noticed a shining star that increased in brightness

as if descending to earth. "In a matter of seconds," he told his interviewers. "it turned into a very shiny oval object headed straight for me. He tried to escape from it by speeding up the tractor, but the object had already landed some 10 to 15 meters ahead of the tractor. "It got closer and I was able to see, for the very first time, that it was a strange device with a slightly rounded shape, encircled by small lights and with a large, enormous red spotlight in front, from which came all the light I could see when it was higher...the machine's shape was now clearly visible. It resembled a large, elongated egg with three spurs in front." AVB added the curious detail that "something appeared to be spinning at high speed on top of the vehicle and gave off a reddish fluorescent light."

Seized by terror, Antonio jumped off the tractor in hopes of eluding his pursuers on foot, but the furrowed terrain made a speedy getaway impossible. The next thing he knew, someone had seized him by the arm. It was a figure much shorter than he, wearing a "strange outfit" and a helmet. The farmer pushed the figure away and managed to knock it to the ground, but three more similarly-dressed figures turned up, grabbing his arms and legs, bearing him off to the waiting craft.

Villas Boas indicated that he did not go off meekly to whatever fate awaited him: he kicked, screamed and hurled insults at his helmeted captors. Given the narrowness of the vehicle's access stairway, the farmer managed to break away from his captors, but he was overpowered once more by their uncanny strength and superior numbers.

The humanoids dragged him into the craft, where he was stripped naked and subjected to several indignities. His captors drew a blood sample from his chin using a chalice-like device, and after slathering him with a strange liquid that covered his entire body, he was taken to a room--unfurnished but for a couch--where he was left alone for some twenty minutes, by his count. At this point, a mixture of fear, nausea and coldness, coupled to the stench of a strange gas that was pumped into the room, led him to vomit in one of the corners.

"After a long time," Villas Boas said, "a noise at the door startled me. I turned in that direction and was shocked to see that it was now open and a woman was entering the room, walking toward me. She was approaching slowly, perhaps amused at the astonishment that must have been visible on my face. My jaw had dropped, and with good reason. This woman was completely naked, as was I, and barefoot. She was also pretty, although different from the women I'd known. Her hair was an almost whitish shade of blonde, as if peroxided, straight and not very abundant, neck-length and with the ends curled inward. Her eyes were blue and large, more narrow than round and slanted outward--like the pencil-painted eyes of those girls who fancy themselves Arabian princesses and make their eyes look slanted; that's what they were like. Only it was a completely natural effect, since there was no paint at all involved."

The strange liquid which had been spread over his body, apparently some sort of aphrodisiac, began to work as Antonio

felt less tense as the small woman began to caress him, ultimately seducing him. "It sounds incredible," he confessed to Fontes and Martins during the interview, "given the situation I was in. I believe that the liquid they rubbed on me was the cause of it. All I know is that I felt an uncontrollable sexual excitement, which had never happened to me before. I forgot about everything and held the woman, returning her caresses with my own. We ended up on the couch, where we had relations for the first time. It was a normal act and she responded like any woman. Then came a period of more caressing followed by more sexual relations. In the end, she was tired and breathing quickly. I was still excited, but she now refused and tried to get away. When I noticed that, I cooled down too. That was what they wanted from me, a good stallion to improve their stock."

The door opened once more and two of the "crewmen" appeared, summoning the woman away. Before leaving, she turned to the farmer and pointed at her belly, then pointing him, and finally at the heavens. Curiously, Villas Boas took this to mean that "she would return to take me from wherever it was she came."

After having served as breeding stock, Antonio was unceremoniously led off the vehicle, which took off immediately. Returning to his tractor, Villas Boas learned that the time was now five thirty in the morning. Estimating that the time had been around 1:15 a.m. when he was abducted, his entire experience had lasted some four hours and fifteen minutes.

"My mother told me shouldn't become involved with those people again. I didn't have the courage to tell my father, since I had already told him about the light that appeared over the pens, and he didn't believe me, telling me that I was seeing things..." Villas Boas concluded.

After his traumatic experience, Villas-Boas withdrew from public life to pursue his studies, earning a law degree and becoming a practicing attorney in the city of Formosa, Goiás, while running a small business on the side. He died in late 1992 in the city of Uberaba, in Brazil's Triângulo Mineiro.

In June 1993, the late Dr. Walter K. Bühler, president of the Sociedade Brasileira de Estudos Sobre Discos Voadores (SBDEDV), disclosed the fact that between 1962-63, his organization had received an anonymous letter from the U.S., inviting Villas-Boas to visit this country in order to examine a recovered flying saucer in the possession of the American military. This letter was sent to Formosa, state of Goiás by Dr. Bühler. Allegedly, Villas Boas's son advised him that his father had indeed visited to the United States to inspect the object but had kept silent the rest of his life concerning the visit.

In the Wake of AVB

On March 3, 1978, in the small hours of the morning, eighteen year old Jose Inacio Alvaro, studying to be an electrician at a vo-tech in the Brazilian town of Pelotas, noticed a strange glow pouring in through one of the windows of

his house. Alvaro, who had been up at that late hour studying, felt an unusual torpor seize him at the very moment that a thin blue beam appeared out of the light. The next thing he remembered was waking up on the street at a considerable distance from his home. Casting a frightened look at his wristwatch, Jose Inacio realized the time was now four o'clock in the morning: he had no recollection of what events had transpired in the intervening two hours.

Jose Inacio's case attracted the attention of Brazilian ufologists who urged him to undergo hypnosis. The sessions were conducted by a number of faculty members of the University of Pelotas and at one point even included the college's chancellor.

Under hypnosis, Jose Inacio recounted an experience that rivalled the classic Antonio Villas Boas case: at a given point, he found himself in an unfurnished, circular room and in the company of a naked, dark-haired woman that was much taller than he. At that point, the student realized that he, too, was unclothed. The woman approached him, placed a hand on his forehead, and told him not to be frightened since no harm would befall him. She immediately began caressing Jose Inacio, who at first had misgivings about the situation but eventually relented. They ended up having sexual intercourse on a structure that he described as "a net."

The details of his carnal experience were intensely graphic. The hypnotists' report states that the subject's words and movements clearly indicate he was reliving the experience under trance. For the sake of decorum, the researchers allegedly erased the recording of the session.

Unlike the AVB case, there were witnesses to Jose Inacio's return from his odyssey. One resident of Pelotas claimed having seen the student lying on the street at that time of the morning; upon approaching to offer assistance, the good samaritan alleged that Jose Inacio stood up like an automaton and walked away from the scene. Other local residents claimed having witnessed the passing of a disk-shaped flying object in the sky above Pelotas, disrupting the power grid as it did so.

AVB's and Jose Inacio Alvaro's experience were not to be unique: they would soon have to share the spotlight with those of a third Brazilian man by the name of Juan Valerio.

On the evening of November 30, 1982, Juan Valerio da Silva went out of his house in the rural town of Botucatú to get some water and did not re-enter the structure. Three hours later, he was found unconscious in his backyard, naked and covered in what appeared to be oil.

Having no conscious recollection of what happened during the twelve-hour absence, hypnosis was again employed to ascertain his whereabouts during the "missing time" period. Valerio claimed that he was taken to a strange place by unseen captors, stripped of his clothing and placed beside a dark-skinned naked woman with long black hair who forced him to engage in sexual activity. A series of "strange tatoos" were

etched upon his body.

While lacking the lurid descriptions that made his predecessors' experiences famous, the importance of Valerio's story lies in what we could term the postscript: the abductee developed a number of psychic abilities, most notably telekinetic powers. He has also had repeated visits from his non-human hosts, and was led to believe that his eldest son, Reginaldo, was also the product of genetic experimentation by these alien entities.

The Events at Mirassol

Mirassol is a city of some thirty-two thousand inhabitants in the state of Sao Paulo, Brazil which has earned its place in ufological history due to the events which allegedly took place there in 1979, regarding the experiences with non-human entities lived by Antonio Carlos Ferreira, who was 21 years old at the time and working as a watchman for a large furniture manufacturer in town.

At three o'clock in the morning on June 28th of that year, Ferreira witnessed a large shining light descend from the darkness on to the ground not far from where he stood watch. As he concentrated on the bright light, he then noticed that three diminutive entities were approaching: their heads were covered by opaque helmets and their bodies were encased in form fitting suits with what the young watchman took to be "breathing devices". Before Ferreira knew it, one of the beings fired a beam of red light which left him paralyzed. He was conveyed--in this state of immobility--toward the painfully bright light, which turned out to be a small disk-shaped craft that shuttled Ferreira and his captors to a larger vehicle in space.

Once aboard this craft, the frightened watchman was surprised to notice two different sorts of beings milling about: one having dark skin and curly red hair, and the other with lighter complexions and straight black hair; both non-human species had large slanted eyes, wide mouths with thick lips, well-defined chins and lacked eyebrows or eyelashes. His own abductors proved to be some sort of "mechanical men" who returned to their stations against a wall after delivering their captive.

Had nothing else occurred, Antonio Carlos Ferreira would have merely been a South American Travis Walton--a stranger in a strange place filled with non-human entities. But the most harrowing part of his unearthly experience was still to come. The humanoids transferred the watchman to a small room and told to lie down on a couch after giving him multiple assurances by telepathic means that he would be returned home unharmed.

Feeling more at ease, Ferreira complied until another being appeared in the room: it was a naked female of the darker skinned alien species. Under the hypnotic regression preformed by the late researcher Walter K. Buhler, Gullermo Pereira and Ney Matiel, Ferreira described his would-be sex partner as

downright repulsive, having an unpleasant breath, an overly large chin, small breasts and icy cold skin. The detail of red pubic hair, which had first emerged in the Villas Boas case, resurfaced in Ferreira's experience.

A struggle with the aliens--also reminiscent of the AVB case--would take place as three of the creatures tore his clothes off to prepare him for the act. Ferreira was outraged and told the female not to come closer since "her ugliness was repulsive". A slightly taller alien gave Ferreira an injection that caused him to lose strength and brought his combativeness to an end. They then covered him in a dark, amber-colored oil and placed the repulsive-looking female on top of him. The sexual act was rapidly consummated and the aliens fussed over him again, bathing him in the strange oil once more. His captors informed him they came from "another planet" and that their mission was to secure human offspring for future research; he was told that he would be contacted once more in order that he could meet his hybrid offspring.

At one point, Ferreira complained of an inability to breathe and his abductors gave him an unpleasant-tasting liquid that appeared to remedy the situation. Similar "cordials" (for want of a better word) also been described in other Brazilian cases, such as the one involving the soldier "Jose Antonio", who was abducted by strange dwarves while fishing on a riverbank.

Ferreira apparently underwent other abduction events of which he had no conscious recollection whatsoever--the second in January 1983 and the third in April of that same year.

One Day While Chasing Kites

This case takes us from subequatorial Brazil to the Caribbean, where in 1934, a teenager identified only as "Julio" became the protagonist of an episode that would scar him for life. It was first investigated by Puerto Rican ufologist Sebastián Robiou (mid-70s), then re-investigated by Salvador Freixedo (late '80s). The witness has since been interviewed once more by Magdalena del Amo-Freixedo (1997).

One morning, while flying a brand new kite on a slope outside the city of Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, before going off to school, young Julio was startled to see his kite being sucked in by what appeared to be an air-pocket or vacuum of some kind. He pulled on the string and noticed an inordinate amount of resistance from the wayward kite. Upon looking up, he was amazed to see a ball "like a ball bearing", but measuring some twenty feet across and having the same coppery hue of a BB. A light issued from the object and he felt himself being raised into the air. Before he knew it, he was inside the strange flying object.

"One one side, I saw a girl," Julio indicated during the interview conducted by Robiou. "and on the other was a guy looking at a some sort of giant emerald. He wore a tight-fitting olive-drab suit that looked like plastic. I couldn't see his face, because he was minding the device. He gestured at the girl...the girl had a pinkish complexion and wore a silvery

suit. She was small, like one of our six year-old girls, with platinum blonde hair. I don't rememeber the color of her eyes."

Julio explained that the child was holding his kite in her hands, and that he made all possible efforts to tell her that it belonged to him. The girl not only did not surrender the kite, but instead gave him a small box, from which images could be made to appear. He did not remember how, but the object returned him to the place from which he had been collected, and returned him abruptly to the ground. He suffered a sprained ankle as a result of the experience--but he had the curious little box with him.

Further details would emerge during Freixedo's re-opening of the case. "Julio", now a hardened man in his early sixties, informed the Spanish ufologist of the ultimate fate of the little box he'd been entrusted with.

The box measured some 20 x 20 x 20 centimeters, and when its "user" placed his or her hands upon it, a "kind of vapor made up of lights" would spin on its surface, causing an entity--as small ape-like creature no more than 1 meter tall --to appear in the room. According to Julio, the entities materialized in such a manner would not speak and appeared to be surprised to find themselves in an alien environment. The girl-child on the strange object had successfully caused the "little apes" to return to their native surroundings or "back into the box", as Julio put it. Only the hapless boy was not so good at this final aspect: the diminutive simians would materialize and vanish at breathtaking speed out the window, many times in the presence of his classmates who had asked him to perform the "neat trick" with the box. The apported entities were not at all pleased, claimed Julio, with their new condition. They would frighten children and dogs, and appeared to prowl the surroundings of Julio's family's house. "Believe me," he told the researcher. "I would just like to die. I'm tired of seeing strange things." The supernatural primates had apparently been the source of a number of mysterious deaths which had occured in his corner of southwestern Puerto Rico over the decades.

When Magdalena del Amo-Freixedo re-opened the case as part of her book *Abducciones* (Bell Book, 1998), a further wrinkle appeared which has a direct bearing to this article.

Now willing to go on the record by his real name --Juan Rivera Feliberti--he explained to Del Amo-Freixedo that his contact with the alien "girl" had not stopped after the incident of the wayward kite. Many years later, now a married man with children, the experierencer moved from Mayaguez to Sabana Grande, P.R. and took his family to the beach one day. While the children frolicked in the water, "Julio" decided to go fishing. He suddenly realized he was not alone: a beautiful woman had appeared right in front of him. A wave of remembrances washed over him as he realized her blonde hair was identical to that of the girl in the odd circular vehicle so many years ago. He asked her where she came from, and she allegedly replied "from far away, from the stars...".

Male figures soon appeared, clad identically to the one he remembered seeing back in 1934. "They were the lady's companions...they were identical to the one I'd seen as a boy. Suddenly, I don't know what she did, but she was completely naked. She didn't tell me anything, but I understood in my mind that she wanted to have relations with me. I didn't want to...I wanted to run away. Besides, my wife could catch me if she happened to come around." Although hesitant to describe his unusual experience to a female investigator, Del Amo-Freixedo eventually convinced him to elaborate. Uncomfortably, "Julio", now in his seventies, continued the story: "Look, I didn't want to at first, but you know how it is. I was young and the woman was very good-looking. She began caressing me all over, and we ended up like men and women do when they're both unclothed."

"Julio" bashfully added that his alien lover's body was not exactly like that of a human female: her breasts appeared to be placed lower on the torso and her pubic area was hairless. He made the curious observation that her skin, while soft, was somewhat scaly. These anatomical differences did not deter him, however: "We [had sex] several times. I think four. Back then one was full of energy and recovered quicker." In subsequent years, he would return to the scene of the events in hope of seeing his unusual sex partner again, but never did.

As if to bring the events in the long, strange life of Juan Rivera Feliberti to a full circle, at around three o'clock a.m. one day in 1995, he saw the same girl who's stolen his kite once more, standing outside his house.

Conclusion

Regardless of the stance we may take regarding the UFO phenomenon, and provided that we are willing to suspend disbelief, the information that can be gleaned from these cases is of considerable interest: absent from the scene are the Greys, Reptoids and Nordics that seem to populate the abductee chronicles--here we have beings of an entirely different taxonomy engaged in an operation or mission that appears to be taking place largely within the confines of Brazil, the South American giant. The commonalities of the experiences--the oily liquid applied on the abductees, which serves as antiseptic and aphrodisiac at once; the beverage that relieves human discomfort; the choice of intercourse rather than artificial insemination--link them together while separating them from the coldly clinical abduction phenomenon in the northern hemisphere.

The fact that this libidinous aspect of the UFO phenomenon appears to have a strong preference for Brazil has led to jocose comments on the appeal of Brazilian virility to non-human intelligences. We cannot deny, however, that somewhat similar situations have occurred elsewhere in the world as well as in our own country.

In October 1974, oil worker Carl Higdon took a day off from work and went hunting near Rawlins, Wyoming. Coming across an elk (an astonishing piece of luck in itself on the first day of

hunting), Higdon pulled the trigger on his rifle only to see the bullet issue from the weapon in slow motion and land fifty feet away from him. To his astonishment, the hunter realized that time was standing still all around him and that a chinless, jawless alien being was looking at him. Higdon was apparently abducted and hooked up to strange devices aboard "a cube-shaped UFO". The hunter attributed the reason for his being returned to Earth by his captors was that he had had a vasectomy performed a few years before the abduction and was therefore useless for the "breeding program" that his captors appeared to be pursuing.

José Manuel Duran's interests range from parapsychology to the role of heavy metal music in the occult. Did we mention he's also a ufologist? This is his first contribution to INEXPLICATA.

An Embarrassment of Humanoid Riches

by José Manuel Duran

We sometimes complain that the subjects of our interest seldom receive the attention they deserve, and we're even forced to acknowledge at some point that mystery appears to follow its own undefined, aimless path.

We complain that Ufology (which is the subject we are discussing now) is simply not credible to the rest of the mortal world, and if we cast a light glance over what is currently on the burners, we will be forced to admit defeat.

Are *They* here? Regardless of their provenance from Outer Space, other levels of existence or from the very innards of our minds, it is fitting to provide answers to these questions, since we have spent more than 50 years playing with the same details, changing their colors and adapting new terminology, but which in the final analysis is the hated "*more of the same*" situation. We should be able to explain, at least, what they're like and what they want. These answers are not very clear to the vast majority of researchers and the statements made by the boldest among them are so ambiguous as to be worthless.

Few of us doubt that the devices we have chosen to dub UFOs or Flying Saucers are manned and that bizarre-looking beings (at least non-human looking) come and go with relative ease. When discussion first began on such strange things, it was said that the crewmen--the humanoids--were here to sneak a peek at us humans, much like tourists. However, there soon appeared cases in which these beings were seen to steal (?) rocks, grass, or a deer now and then. Were they covering such great distances to gather samples? How absurd...although, that's exactly what we did when we went to the Moon.

But a question rapidly emerges once we accept the possibility that *They* are here. Are they aggressive? Merely explorers? Peeping Toms? Invaders? Who can tell? After years of case studies, it would seem as if *They* have lost interest in the things that our planet has to offer and have arrogantly passed

up on fish, water, and power stations to concentrate a little more on human beings...the allegedly intelligent species that misguidedly thinks it rules the world.

On a personal note, I would like to know what these UFO crewmen are like: what they look like, if they have ears and tails, noses, mouths or teeth. I'd like to know if their feet smell, if they sneeze, need to use helmets, if they blink, if they can see colors...but researchers, those who have consecrated their life and efforts on this accursed crusade, are not able to devote solid answers to these questions.

Millions of eyewitness accounts; humanoids all over the world whose descriptions vary in an alarming manner. Does this give ufology greater credibility, or does it undermine its health?

What are they like? How many fingers to they have? Are they ugly? Do they have shape? Genitalia?

At first, the variety of occupants was such that the enormous differences between them were illogical (or at least, didn't seem logical to us). If these were extraterrestrial visitors, why were so many different species visiting us? The broad zoo of ufology gave skeptics reason to laugh (and it still does), since they're aware that there's no way of grappling with these invaders: *Humans, monsters, apes, tall, short, blond, hairy, hairless, speaking, grunting, telepathic...* They're either stealing pebbles or arranging their vehicles in the shape of...*hell!*... everything from eggs, irons, tourines, dishes, balloons, triangles, squares...there are as many types of humanoids as there are craft in which to carry them. I sincerely doubt that there could be as many rubbernecks on this planet. No space civilization could be intelligent if they stopped to look at human beings at the drop of a hat. Could we be dealing with a crude, vulgar hoax? Is it all just a deception, or a fraud? Are the documents obtained over all these years of research at all reliable? Of course they can be reliable. Perhaps--as was observed by earlier reserachers into the mystery--they are only showing us a disguise that conceals their true intentions. Maybe. Perhaps this could just be an explanation to justify the variety of creatures and spaceships...maybe it's an attempt to avoid insisting on why everything is so absurd, on why everything is so complicated. Why won't the pieces of this jigsaw puzzle fit?

In any case, we cannot overlook the small evolution that the UFO phenomenon has undergone in itself. Even today, we continue to see vehicles of many different characteristics, but saucerlike craft remain alarmingly dominant, along with spherical objects and the ubiquitous triangular objects which have caused so many headaches in recent years. The "intentions" of the alien astronauts (?) have also varied, and far from making repairs to their vehicles in remote and deserted fields, or taking samples of rocks, vegetation or dirt, they have concentrated their efforts upon animals and above all, humans, whom they supposedly abduct.

This humanoid taxonomy has also spit out a pattern known as the "Greys" or "EBEs", who majestically dominate the ufological scene. Perhaps this is the alien race that visits us with malevolent intentions? Or is it still just another element in this UFO free-for-all? Perhaps they represent a logical ingredient in the illogical soup of ufology, or another joke for the sideshow we have been witnessing--the irritating theatre show of hair-raising incongruities which mock human intelligence. Maybe there are just too many saucers, too many humanoids...maybe so. But for some reason or another we must remain in the breach, which promises to be the only we we shall ever understand this phenomenon some day. It's almost certain that we aren't wasting our time.

Argentina's Dr.Roque Mecoli is a distinguished scientist and instructor with a lifelong interest in UFOs. His MISTERIO-AR newsgroup on the Internet is one of the most highly respected in South American ufology. Please join me in welcoming his first contribution to INEXPLICATA.

The Pros and Cons of Alien Visitation

by Dr. Roque Mecoli

Regardless of whether we are being visited or not by entities from outer space and/or other dimensions (a caveat I make out of respect for the beliefs of others, "yea" sayers and naysayers alike, since I have stated elsewhere that I have the impression that the polarities in this and many other aspects [of the UFO phenomenon] have existed for years, and I honestly do not want to engage in a debate because we are unlikely to reach a satisfactory conclusion for all the perspectives), there is a highly interesting which I have never seen mentioned in any bibliography or copious reports on the subject.

When we speak of the intentions of the E.T.'s who are supposedly visiting us, there are certain matters to be taken into consideration.

Allow me for a moment, in the guise of a working hypothesis only, to accept beyond any doubt whatsoever that our world has been visited for centuries by nonhuman entities, hailing from cosmic space, hailing from other dimensions, or from wherever...What do we actually know about them? Quite a bit, and nothing to sneeze at. Let's see...

- If we take reports that discuss their behavior to be valid documents, it is plainly shown that to date, they have no intention to manifest themselves publicly and clearly to mankind as a whole. If they have the means and/or the technology to get here, it is absurd to suppose that they would not know how to do so or be unable to do so, since even by means of crude "radio" technology, emitting primitive signals that betray the existence of an intelligent pattern behind them, would

suffice to begin an exchange.

- If we take the reports of cases in which vehicles and/or occupants have been taken by surprise by humans as true, their behavior has generally resulted in escape or avoidance, sidelining the abduction issue due to its polemical nature and to keep this analysis from becoming overly complex (Please note I said "taken by surprise").
- The luminous manifestations that would theoretically be identified as their craft and/or conveyances in our world, cannot to this day be satisfactorily explained by science, in the sense that many reports hint at a technology or handling of underlying physical laws which our own scientific development has not yet attained, at least to the level necessary to understand them (regardless of what said "lights" actually may be).
- The foregoing point, in turn, gives rise to this one: that any person having a knowledge of physics and other related sciences is aware that space travel *per se* is a matter of the utmost complexity. Things do not occur as they do in the movies, or in *Star Trek*, where building-sized vehicles move with the same ease as car. There is nothing more hostile, horrible and inhospitable than deep space, and it is necessary to possess advanced knowledge to cover sidereal distances, aside from having, of course, the scientific background to bring it into being in the first place. If we add to this cocktail the subject of interdimensional travel, then the degree of complexity increases exponentially and shockingly.
- In spite of the countless UFO reports in existence, showing the most diverse configurations imaginable (many of them perhaps fraudulent, others representing genuine enigmas), these entities have proven to be, to date, sufficiently intelligent as to not leave any tangible proof of their existence--some device, mechanism or even a screw left behind one night somewhere...enough to analyze in our laboratories and discover, at the very least, an alloy not of this Earth (we only have photographs and film clips which are largely useless).
- This point is likewise derived from the foregoing: the ability to avoid making mistakes of this nature renders the belief that their vehicles could come crashing to the ground as sheer foolishness; as if said vehicles were piloted by student drivers. If they have been able to overcome the bleakness of space and are not prone to minor errors as stated before, this agrees perfectly with a coherent set of suppositions, and I repeat, indicates concomitant intelligence and/or advanced knowledge. Therefore, my friends, *I do not believe in the ubiquitous saucer crashes, one of*

them which has been highly touted.

- There are persons dubbed "Contactees", allegedly having the ability to make contact with these intelligences (or perhaps more aptly, they have the ability to reach Contactees!) through a variety of means, with the common denominator in these cases being some sort of teaching and/or advice and/or lessons given by these entities to mankind. There are also, it would seem, isolated individuals or groups who are in contact with these intelligences under certain circumstances.

To avoid overly extending this article, I will stop with the ones we have listed up to here in an effort to see if certain deductions can be made from them...although my sole interest is in articulating the following question: *What inferences can be made concerning their intentions?* This is the question I would like to address--one which has been a matter of exchange between researchers and enthusiasts for a long time now.

First, may I remind the reader that these are completely *a priori* suppositions, and should not be construed as my taking a stance on them. I only wish to reach, through simple logical reasoning, at least a single point having a certain degree of validity. To do this, my working method accepts and holds true many things which I am perfectly aware are not shared by others, but, I repeat, it is only a focusing point, whose foundations are perhaps incorrect (to some). With a bit of luck, we shall see if we can determine the point at which "there are errors in the hypothesis", since this would in itself imply a humble degree of progress in the subject.

Furthermore, throughout this entire analysis, I have stationed myself on a kind of "middle of the road" that is as logical and natural as possible, but I am fully aware that in doing so I'm putting aside numerous factors--perhaps some of them highly important.

My very personal, and perhaps debatable, manner of approaching an issue of this nature is to try and adopt the mindset or perspective of my opponent, and try to reach some possible solutions by this method. But, isn't it reckless or nonsensical to adopt the stance of an ET, of whom we know next to nothing aside from contactee-provided information? I don't think so, if we bear certain details in mind.

While it is true that we don't know any life forms comparable to humanity at the level of development analogous to the development of a substantial culture or civilization, terrestrial science can fortunately assist us with a healthy dose of common sense.

Thus, through information provided by radio telescopes from distant and perilous places in the cosmos, we know that the molecules and atoms discovered so far prove that "there is

nothing new under the sun". It is of no concern that the Orion Nebula has oxygen existing as a positive ion in its natural state, due to the formidable conditions reigning there, and which cause it to lose electrons--a fact which could only be duplicated on Earth under special laboratory conditions.

What matters is that *oxygen is there and continues to be oxygen*, even many light-years away. Furthermore, more complex molecules have been found, such as the simplest alcohols, cyanohydrin, and perhaps most interestingly, the precursors of the aminoacids, among others. To a chemist like myself, the observation of such molecules allows me to infer their bonds, energy, etc.--matters which are commonly known to modern chemistry. To summarize the chemical aspect, I will state that I'm convinced that regardless of the planets or places these life forms may hail from, they will be the product of the logical adaptation of their lives to their specific worlds, but *will be unable to escape the laws of chemistry*. Therefore, I do not believe at all (and this statement is just one example) that in any part of the Universe there could be *complex* silicon-based lifeforms, for the simple reason that the silicon atom's size, linked to its electronegativity, forbids the creation of long and stable atomic chains (as carbon is able to do) both here and in the most distant galaxy, in conditions which are analogous to our own.

I will brook no debate on this question, and any arguments to the contrary belong squarely in the realm of science fiction, for the moment. In any case, radiotelescope data serves to confirm my ideas, and that is why I mention it. My impression is therefore that an attempt must be made to understand the mental mechanisms of hypothetical creatures, very possibly different to us and having internal differences that agree to the external ones (the absence of a heart, or a heart having four ventricles, or anything you can imagine), but basically constituted by chemical parameters which could under no circumstances be opposite to our own. In this sense, I'm surprised-- and even suspicious, why not? -- that the entities described to now, which have been seen or allegedly seen, resemble us so closely...there is talk of the Chupacabras, etc., and even the notorious "Greys" having a decidedly humanoid appearance. Of course, I accept that someone can sustain the hypothesis that Life, as a universal phenomenon, may be almost identical throughout the universe as regards its appearance (a very respectable position, in fact), but I think its a flimsy hypothesis to uphold, aware as we are of the extraordinary complexity and diversity in the Cosmos. To summarize this item: *these life-forms cannot have nightmarishly different thought processes from our own, despite having two heads and five arms, if you like. It is quite logical to suppose, based on their probable chemical framework, and on information which we already have, that they cannot be substantially different from us.*

It is therefore that I risk putting myself in their position in an effort to answer the question stated earlier. At this purely scientific point of the matter I reiterate my strong-headedness, and will only accept strictly scientific rebuttals. I will accept, however, any theories different to my own or opposite to

them, as well as the corresponding rebuttals.

To summarize from another perspective:

a) If they are very similar to us based on the idea that Life in the Universe follows similar patterns, regardless of any other factors, then this is a point in favor of the contactees, and it is neither difficult nor reckless to guess their thought patterns.

b) If on the contrary, this is not the case, there are weighty reasons to suspect that their basic chemistry cannot be so wildly diverging from our own--what is more, it should be almost identical (by this I don't mean metabolic or chemical processes, or anything similar) and only differences in structure and function by adaptation factors would be observable. They could have chloroplasts instead of mitochondria, or their aminoacids could be dextrogyrous and/or levogyrous, they could be anaerobic or aerobic, oviparous rather than mammals, etc. But the essence rests upon what is chemically known to us, and therefore, I don't believe their minds would consider it prudent to point their spaceships toward the core of a nearby star to acquire a suntan for beauty purposes (?) in an act of cosmic madness (or would cosmic "incineration" be more appropriate?).

I don't wish to dwell on this point excessively, but I insist that chemistry could be of great help to us in this analysis. While I cannot continue abounding on this for reasons of time as so as not to abuse my readers' patience, it is still possible to pursue this analysis from a chemical perspective, approaching other aspects and details. This means that we can reach the same conclusion on different paths: they must have something (or enough) in common with us to try and speculate on their possible intentions, using our own brains as tools. But what if they're beings from other dimensions? What if their worlds are located in other dimensions? What if they are beings of raw energy? What if their spaceships or their travels are interdimensional?

I will discard nothing. What is more, I have heard the above from many contactees....Ahhhh!! Wait a minute....because in this case we have already detected a contradiction or at least a matter that is difficult to explain. Because if this is the point, then I don't understand what they would find of interest to them in the "physical" world (our own planet, of course). Why appear thousands of times in their shiny vessels if they could do the very same thing from a higher dimension, in principle, without being noticed, since dimensions are interpenetrating (from the physical and mystical standpoint alike) Why descend from their vehicles at night and engage in unfathomable motions and actions? This is utterly ridiculous!

Furthermore, haven't contactees themselves told us that their communications are almost 100% mental, telepathic, etc.? Or does a contactee have to board a saucer to receive instruction? I've never heard such a tale from any contactee...The moral here is that they are either not interdimensional, nor do they travel through other dimensions, or all the reports compiled to date are frauds, hoaxes or errors, or obey some hitherto unknown

natural phenomenon having nothing to do with aliens, saucers, etc.

Under no circumstances can I believe that beings having such scientific and/or technological development would have the need to scorch some fields on lonely nights, nor mutilate cattle for God-knows-what reason. Such silliness eludes all logical thinking and does not deserve the slightest analysis, so one would have to choose to believe one thing or another, but I fear that it's impossible to believe both at the same time.

Furthermore, the alternative of the hypothetical interdimensional origin of the ETs with their constant public appearances in the world in which we live is incompatible or irreconcilable with the concept of Energy, which has been well studied by the science known as physics. It is evident for anyone who handles the most basic rudiments of this discipline that a fundamental question arises: regardless of the methods employed, nor the energy sources to which they have access, nor their advancement relative to our own...if a saucer, for example, must traverse the vast distances of outer space, this would imply a truly massive consumption of energy, as any astrophysicist, physicist or astronomer very well knows, and which can even be calculated according to the circumstances. If rather than travelling through space, we imagine travel across dimensions, jumps from one dimension to another, etc. (with all the materializations and dematerializations involved) and the plethora of fantastic statements which I have heard, according to what we know about the structure of matter and some of its laws, this would involve a far greater energy expenditure than conventional travel.

Therefore, unless ET's are certifiably insane (which I doubt), it is unreasonable to choose (even if they had the wherewithal to do so), a process involving greater energy consumption over one that involves less. These processes are truly exorbitant. Things are not handled this way in the Universe...nor can two-headed, five-armed creatures do it, as I stated earlier (unless they have a screw loose, lost in some field at night...)

Any thinking beings, regardless of their galaxy, having to abide by such choices, is condemned beforehand by supine idiocy to never reach space even in a primitive capsule, as we did. In fact, I believe they would never even manage to develop a moderately advanced civilization. These points having been cleared, let us return to our main goal.

To avoid writing countless additional reasoning, it will be most expedient, I think to move on to the matter that interests us most: whether these beings have good or bad intentions toward us. It is not an easy question to address, of course, but we'll give it a shot...

- What could be going through the minds of these beings that flutter around our world?
- Why do they do it, or have chosen to do it since the past, regardless of what point in the past?
- What could be so interesting and important about Earth

to them?

To judge by the available information, we can observe an attitude of investigation: they want to know our world, our cities, our soil, our atmosphere, our traits...things that are natural and reasonable in my view. If we someday manage to travel great distances and stumble across a planet inhabited by beings having certain sophistication, we would probably behave in much the same way. It is obvious that "they" would have realized that we are not only underdeveloped, not only technologically, but that we are unfortunately a race unable to overcome its warlike nature and a series of "bad habits" that makes us worthy of being kept at arms'length. This crucial point enables us to make a deduction from both the technological and temporal standpoints--given the extensive amount of time they have spent among us, they have had the occasion and the means to conquer us and/or enslave us. If they haven't done so it's because they have chosen not to...or because they don't exist...it's just that simple (at least for the time being).

What I really don't understand are the arguments wielded by so many people in the sense that it is illogical that after the tremendous effort involved to reach us, in energy alone, they should not show themselves openly and boldly.

Friends...if I was an ET and reached a planet having characteristics like our own, I might behave exactly the same way. I would carry out my assigned tasks (most likely of a scientific nature) and would have nothing at all to do with the planet's occupants, or would at least try not to. At most, I would try to take some random specimens for a more detailed study (abductions? kidnapping? Hmm. Rather interesting variables...)

Up to this point everything would appear to run smoothly in our line of reasoning, but there are certain matters that interfere with this line of thought. Firstly, Contactees tell us of the existence of supposedly telepathic channels that exist between themselves and the aliens. By means of said exchange, we now have enough information concerning their thought processes, intentions, purpose on Earth, etc. Are such exchanges at all feasible?

I would think so (since it has nothing to do with the subject of interdimensional travel or similar absurdities), since I don't have any elements that let me discard, ipso facto, a mental resonance between a human being, in this case, and an ET aboard a spacecraft circulating in our own atmosphere. I am well aware that this is a highly controversial subject, since telepathy is not scientifically proven in the least...I am employing a rather unscientific argument which feels satisfactory to me. A case in point: I've lost count of the times that for various reasons I've thought of my beloved cat Ro-Ro (an animal!) only to have her, don't ask me how, pick up my thoughts and respond to them. If this isn't a mental link between myself and her, then somebody please explain to me what it is! (my apologies for such a simple example, but i have no inclination to steer from this subject and have to write many additional pages).

In any case--I repeat and I stress--my intention is not to unleash an argument on this point. I'm merely expressing my opinion freely, accepting that there are ideas diametrically opposed to mine.

Retaking the path of our analysis, I think that there is a vital key concealed herein to answer our initial question.

- It is indispensable to create interdisciplinary scientific teams to engage in a serious, rigorous and unprejudiced study of the Contactee phenomenon.

Said teams, after detecting and discarding hoaxers and impostors (of which I am not sure) must probe to the fullest extent possible, after a arduous, difficult and prolonged process, these people and the messages they receive. It is obvious that three conclusions will be reached, among others:

- a. That it is impossible to draw any definitive conclusions (which I doubt).
- b. That reasonable conclusions can be drawn which frame, within a reasonable percentage of certainty, that we are being visited by aliens.
- c. That conclusions can be drawn as to the whole thing being explainable through alternative mechanisms, and that it is almost a certainty that there are no aliens to speak of.

It is almost childish to hint at the importance of these conclusions, regardless of alternative "b" or "c" being the winner.

Since I cannot constitute on my own, or insanely take on the faculties of an entire high-pressure work team in action, it becomes obvious that I lack the elements to judge the contents of the messages as being true. Doing so is meaningless in the context of being unable to support them by facts or serious studies made in this regard. I further understand that all of this exposition has left many loose ends, which I myself have left untied. But the fact remains that it is a very complex matter and tying them up would mean retracing my steps and writing a whole lot more...an activity for which I unfortunately lack the time.

I can neither confirm nor deny that there are ETs spinning around out there, but if so, I tend toward believing that their activities are not unwholesome toward us. At least, as far as we can tell or guess at now, whether because their moral fiber is such...or because there are simply no ETs at all out there. All is relative, and it could be that the facts will prove me wrong tomorrow...I don't know...in fact, I have no reason to know...the progress of the events shall ultimately be the factor that determines the ultimate truth of the matter.

[Dr. Mecoli welcomes your comments to his article at:
rofe48ma@cable.net.ar]

Never Mind the Saucers: UFOs Identified!

by Manuel Carballal

Spanish defense minister Eduardo Serra will find himself having to reply before Congress to a question placed by deputy Willy Meier, a member of the Defense Committee: what was the true nature and purpose of the device that crashed in Barbate (Cádiz) a few years ago, and whose existence has been denied by the Defense Ministry?

In 1997, the residents of Barbate (Cádiz) were startled by the collision of a strange object. One of the witnesses did not delay in taking photographs showing the debris of what has been identified as a U.S. spyplane, along with two helicopters from the military base at Rota and U.S. troops collecting the remains. Meyer suspects that the Rota base is employed to store sensitive espionage devices, such as a sophisticated telephone detection system and small unmanned drone spyplanes.

The first time that Meyer addressed the government in regard to the artifact that collided in Andalucía and was later collected by the Americans, Defense thoroughly denied it. But now the deputy has photographic proof of what he believes to be a violation of national airspace.

Strange incidents have occurred over the past years in other parts of the country, but have otherwise been relegated to the shadowy borderlands of the saucer mythos. Mysterious lights in the sky, unknown radar traces, enigmatic objects that crash and are retrieved by military men...it seems like a storyline for the X-Files, but the source behind these events is much more solid than that: there is no need to invoke little green men from space.

Meyer's questions in Parliament coincide with a political storm that has been brewing in Italy as the consequence of an aviation accident which took place almost 20 years ago: at 10:00 pm on the night of July 27, 1980, a DC-9 flying between Bologna and Palermo crashed and killed 81 passengers aboard it what would become known as the Ustica Tragedy. At the time, some Italian publications attributed the collision to the DC-9's proximity to a UFO prior to crashing, and even that the airliner exploded in mid air. The Italian military denied everything, insisting that it had merely been an accident.

But special judge Rosario Priore has recently brought generals Lamberto Bartolucci, the former Air Force Chief of Staff; Franco Ferri, the former Assistant Chief of Staff of the Defense Ministry; Corrado Mellillo, former Section Chief of the Air Force, and Zeno Tascio, former head of Intelligence for the Italian Air Force on the grounds of bearing false witness--all of them stand accused of lying about the Ustica Tragedy.

Only a few weeks ago, several German publications printed the hitherto most solid theory about the accident: the UFO sighted by the witnesses to the event was in fact a missile. As shown in the hearings initiated by Priore, the remains of a Libyan MIG fighter were discovered a few weeks following the

accident. For 20 years, UFO stories successfully distracted the public over the real cause of the accident: a military mistake.

Martians in Galicia

In 1994, hundreds of Galicians witnessed an object flying over Porriño, Vigo and Bueu until it impacted against the island of Ons (Pontevedra). "It looked like a giant suppository", "an iron cylinder spitting fire from behind", claimed the eyewitnesses. Portuguese civil aviation reports now clarify the mystery--the object was a missile launched from Portugal which penetrated Spanish airspace. This has not been the only instance. On a number of occasions, Galician sailors have seen bizarre objects in the sky and have collected the remains of metallic artificats in their fishing nets. From the diplomatic and political perspective, it would have been much more serious for the press to publish that a Portuguese missile had flown over several Spanish towns only scant miles from the Galician shore, rather than stating that Galician fishermen are seeing Martians.

This has been the screen behind which the Defense Ministry has concealed numerous military experiments in our country. That same year, also in Galicia, a more serious incident took place. A luminous object seen by hundreds on the morning of January 18th collided Mt. Cando (La Coruña) leaving a spectacular crater measuring over 100 meters in diameter.

Astrophysicists from the University of Santiago de Compostela headed to the site in search of what they thought was a meteorite, but when they reached the location could not find any traces of the object that had caused the crater. Residents of nearby towns claimed having seen policemen, members of the *Guardia Civil* and soldiers in the area. Jose Antonio Tormé, the owner of the property on which the UFO had collided, was located and confirmed that there had indeed been soldiers and policemen in the vicinity. And with good reason: the object had crashed not far from the Spanish military radar facility for the northwestern region. Santiago University astrophysicists have suggested in the prestigious journal *Nature* that the object was a secret military artifact.

Incredible thought it may seem, this is hardly an isolated event. On other occasions, as occurred that same year in La Coruña and previously in Seville, strange aeronautical devices fell to earth, unleashing a UFO psychosis: the one in Seville crossed the skies over Cádiz and Huelva before striking the ground near El Coronil. According to eyewitnesses interviewed in the area, U.S. soldiers from Rota quickly appeared in helicopters and all-terrain vehicles to collect the remains of a weather balloon, it would seem. Deputy Willy Meyer also has recent evidence of this incident.

Psychological Warfare

This is hardly the first time that matters relating to airspace violations reach Congress. In 1979, Socialist parliamentarian Enrique Múgica asked questions pursuant to the

unidentified flying object seen in Manises (Valencia). With the PSOE [*Spain's socialist party--Ed.*] in power at the time, Popular party deputies like Gabriel Elorriaga queried the Government three times on the matter of UFOs in the national airspace. But a deathly silence envelops the most serious cases.

A few months ago, the chiefs of the La Virgen del Camino (León) air base accepted responsibility for the fire that devastated hundreds of acres in the mountains of León. Apparently, an error in calculation had been made during the trials of a new flying device and it crashed to the ground, setting the wilderness on fire. These accidents, while serious, are not as disquieting as the use made of the extraterrestrial myth by the secret services.

Many people confess to believing that we are being visited by alien spacecraft. Movies and television have familiarized us with the concept of alien visitations. In fact many cults hold the ET mythos as central to their beliefs. These beliefs represent excellent tools to be used by the Intelligence establishment.

Spain's CESID, according to Defense Ministry sources, may have been involved in the creation of a psychosocial experiment involving alien contact in Spain's most important case: the UMMO affair. Hundreds of people were lead to believe, both domestically and abroad, that an alien civilization had infiltrated our world.

In the U.S. and France, the secret services have conducted similar psychological experiments since the 1960's, not only covering their aeronautical experiments behind the UFO smokescreen, but promoting the belief in extraterrestrials among small groups in order to study their reactions. This summer, France has unveiled the COMETA Report, prepared by a team of scientists and military men for prime minister Jospin. The report features accusations by the French against the U.S. for deliberately concealing UFO information to camouflage its developments in military technology.

Ex Libris
A Random Sampling of Hispanic Ufology in Print

Historias Aeronáuticas que Nos Hicieron Creer en OVNIS
by *Francisco J. Máñez*. Valencia: Editorial Tetragrama,
1999. 142 pages. Paperback.

This remarkable little book, whose title translates as "Aeronautical Stories which Led Us To Believe in UFOs" is the perfect book for two wildly dissimilar readers: the UFO buff and the WW II enthusiast. Author Francisco Máñez's book indicates that the first UFO sightings were in fact Nazi prototypes being tested by the Allied powers during the postwar years. Rather than interplanetary, they should be studied as part of the "secret history" of aeronautics.

At this point, howls of disapproval can surely be heard. But Máñez poses the compelling thesis of how financial, military and political interests fostered a belief in flying saucers and extraterrestrials as a smoke-screen for their projects. Nothing new here--certainly Renato Vesco and INEXPLICATA's own Manuel Carballal have ploughed that field before. But the author produces amazing photographs that give us the full impact WW II Germany's breathtaking aeronautical secrets. Being an aviation buff myself, I was stunned by a never-seen-before photo of the colossal Junkers Ju-390 heavy bomber: a six-propeller monster with an endurance of 32 hours. Máñez tells us the Luftwaffe specifically built this plane to bomb New York City, and came within 20 kilometers of the city undetected during its trial runs. Even more ominous is the fact that a nuclear-capable version was on the drawing boards.

Photos of manmade saucers dot the text: Rene Crouzet's perfect saucer-shaped vehicle; Argentina's triangular IA-37; SNECMA's Lit-Cage Volant (a cigar-shaped contraption), and many others. While the book is unconvincing when it comes to tackling the issue of UFO occupants, it remains a powerful advocate for the belief that a large share of saucer sightings (the CE-Is) can be explained as manmade vehicles.

Thanks to Internet book ordering services such as <www.crisol.es> it is now possible to acquire books from overseas with greater ease than before. If the "Nazi Saucer" scenario thrills you, you can't go wrong with this book.

INEXPLICATA gives *Historias Aeronáuticas*... ★ ★ ★ ★

Dr. Rafael A. Lara's
MEXICO WATCH

[Interview with Dr. Rafael Lara in July, 1997. From the journals of Scott Corrales].

The lobby of Mexico City's Hotel Majestic - right on the city's main square, El Zocalo - is a visit to the 19th century's most baroque tastes. The hotel, housed in an 18th century structure, rises over the ashes of some forgotten Aztec palace as it looks directly at the city Cathedral and at the Presidential Palace - usurpers of the prime real estate once filled by the massive temples of ancient Tenochtitlan.

It was among this fin-de-siecle decor that I would meet one of Mexico's most energetic and restless researchers of matters cryptozoological: Dr. Rafael Lara Palmeros, Director of Research for that country's respected Center for the Study of Paranormal Phenomena, or CEFPP, by its Spanish acronym.

While Dr. Lara had been a long-distance colleague and the contributing editor to my *Samizdat* newsletter, it was not until 1997 that we were actually able to meet face to face (something which is becoming of increasingly diminishing importance in these days of the Internet) and discuss the latest happenings in the world of high strangeness.

"You'll find," Dr. Lara explained. "That the divisions of opinion regarding UFO and paranormal phenomena are much more pronounced here than in the U.S., at least among the experts. Many former researchers have even joined the ranks of skeptics in order to achieve respectability."

"But the public is much more receptive to the subject," I interjected.

"Ah, but not to the Chupacabras, which is perceived as a smoke and mirrors technique by the government to distract popular attention from the current economic crisis - the legacy of the Salinas administration."

There could be no arguing that particular point. A visit to a small collectables store in Mexico City's fashionable Zona Rosa (the Pink Zone) yielded a treasure trove of figurines representing the Chupacabras, most of them depicting former president Salinas's head grafted on to a clawed animal-like body, holding bags of money pilfered from an already depleted treasury. Other depictions were equally creative and far more rude.

Psychosis was the word bandied about by the Mexican media to describe the public's reaction to the Goatsucker's trail of woe across Mexico in 1996. It was refreshing to hear a member of the medical profession not use the term so lightly. "The animal deaths were real. My visits to the Tlalixcoyan region dispelled any doubts we may have had." Dr. Lara explained soberly. The hotel lobby was now becoming filled with dozens of tourists forming part of an excursion having little or no interest in the paranormal. We decided to move to the hotel's inner courtyard, where the silence was punctuated only by the songs of tropical birds living in cages among well-kept greenery.

"In fact, the bulk of CEFPP's research," Lara continued, picking up the thread of our conversation. "Was hampered by the fact that local residents thought we were government agents or

undercover operatives for the Judicial Police. They refused to say anything at first."

I made a comment on how researching any unorthodox subject was hard enough without having to deal with the extraneous factor of government-created situations. A number of massacres in the countryside, allegedly perpetrated by officialdom against farmers, would certainly discourage the "free exchange of ideas" taken for granted in the United States.

But these unfortunate situations in no way discourage the efforts of Mexican researchers. Dr. Lara has vigorously pursued a number of cryptozoological oddities in his country - the elusive Bearman, the semi-legendary Onza, the Tecolotla "monster" - and exchanged the results of his research with luminaries of the field such as Richard Greenwell, Bernard Heuvelmans and Michel Raynal. His greatest adversary has not been skepticism but the carelessness of scientific establishment: priceless evidence pertaining to the Onza was mishandled by a laboratory at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, for example. When the animal mutilations first began in Veracruz, the School of Veterinary Medicine of the State University - logically, the first official agency to have been contacted in the matter - claimed to be "out of the loop" when it came to the strange slayings and even asked Dr. Lara to keep them abreast of developments.

The public may be reticent about discussing the most recent wave of paranormal activity, but this does not characterize Mexican public's response to the unknown. Willing to believe to the extent of being credulous, the public has grown up with legends of dreaded La Llorona (a night-wandering spirit whose manifestations have been recorded since pre-colonial times), ghosts, mischievous aluches and chaneques (water elementals) and of course, the contemporary phenomenon of UFOs, which is not so contemporary. The chronicles of Aztec emperors report a frightening apparition Moyohualitohua, the "screamer in the darkness", whose booming threats in the dark of night prompted the Aztecs to sacrifice twenty four thousand victims in 1492 in hopes of appeasing the unknown visitor. Two separate codexes depict this saucer-shaped intruder.

Who knows? Perhaps some early cryptozoologist whose name is forever lost to history was hot on the tail of the Tlacantzolli or "divided men" which were seen shortly before the arrival of the Spanish conquistadores, or even the bizarre bird with a mirrored head that showed Cortez's troops marching inexorably toward Anahuac.

The Center for the Study of Paranormal Phenomena also spearheaded a number of research initiatives into Mexico's enigmatic Zone of Silence in the Sonora Desert. This fabled location, the subject of much legend, is now clearly marked on AAA maps. CEFPP members produced a vast (and sadly unpublished) catalogue of the strange creatures found in the area, such as the desert-dwelling tortoise, *Gopherus flavomarginatus*, whose triangular markings are unknown elsewhere in the world. Samples of other unusual insects and reptiles were collected for study, but the paranormal bent of its members was satisfied by the discovery of giant skeletons. Were there, in fact, giants in those days?

The skeletons we found at the Zone of Silence were of a decidedly simian nature, according to Dr. Lara, probably

corresponding to the *Gigantopithecus*. However, ancient Mexican lore discusses the existence of giant beings such as the Quinametzin and the Kinawe, who apparently existed well into human times. CEFPP hopes someday to release a publication of all its discoveries in this area.

Research into the controversial feline known as the Onza, a puma-sized animal allegedly native to the western Sierra Madre, has provided Lara and CEFPP with worldwide recognition. First reported in the mid-1700 by the Jesuit missionary Ignatz Pfefferkorn, it was not until 2 centuries later, in April 1995, that a Sinaloa rancher shot a specimen of a hitherto unknown cat in a nearby mountain valley. Samples of the mystery feline's inner organs were sent to the UNAM to undergo electrophoretic analysis, but they were apparently "misplaced".

"So, Rafael, tell me." I began, asking the question I enjoy asking fellow researchers. "When did you first get bitten by the paranormal bug?"

"It was at age 7," he replied evenly. "I was living on a quiet street in my town of Jalapa and happened to be playing with friends when Arturo, a Downs Syndrome child, suddenly stopped in his tracks and began crying and holding on to us, saying goodbye to each and every one of us and urging us to please come to his wake at eight o'clock that night, since he was about to die. He went along the street inviting everyone to his wake, and was ignored by all. Yet at 20:00 hrs. that night he lay dead in his home. I was deeply shocked by this fact. From that age onward I took an interest in the world that surrounds us and in things that have no explanation."

"Would you like your own kids to become junior investigators?"

"No. The very young shouldn't become involved with these phenomena unless they are well grounded and have a firm mental, intellectual and moral basis. It's so easy for the young to fall prey to sects. Besides, many children consider the paranormal to be a hobby and don't give it the importance it deserves. They're believers today and skeptics tomorrow."

"Who were your early influences?"

"Well, I'd have to say Charles Fort, first and foremost. Then I read the works of Nandor Fodor, Vallée, Richard Haines, Scott Rogo and Berthold Schwarz, with Dr. Bernard Heuvelmans own writings fueling my cryptozoological interests. But the Complete Books of Charles Fort contain a crucial fact that everyone should know: reality has well-defined borders which our brains can neither fathom nor explain. Keel's Operation Trojan Horse taught me that a researcher has to have equal doses of intuition and sensitivity when approaching paranormal phenomena. Scott Rogo's The Haunted Universe showed me the first scientific approach of mind over matter, for instance."

I paused to look around at the gorgeous *talavera de Puebla* tilework surrounding the inner courtyard. "Given Mexico's vastly diverging social classes, the native languages still spoken, and other factors, it must be a challenge to do fieldwork."

Dr. Lara shook his head. "To a certain extent. There is diversity regarding the socio-cultural background of the witnesses. We no longer deal strictly with illiterate peasants, but with highly trained professional observers who conceal their experiences to avoid ridicule. Abductees, for example, range from people who truly underwent an experience to individuals who

are after exposure, money, or simply a forum for their views. There are regional factors at play, of course. In some parts of Mexico there are bizarre luminous phenomena described by the peasantry as "witches" or "warlocks", giving rise to the magical or shamanic interpretation of the phenomenon. We would classify them as UFOs, of course. We get the same thing with haunted houses. The masses believe that all apparitions are a consequence of money or treasure being hidden on the premises, while a researcher would think in terms of poltergeists. The socio-cultural factor is always at play when interpreting unknown phenomena. I'm sure its the same in the U.S."

"Well, I'm not so sure," I laughed. "It seems that people from all walks of life share the same obsession with Roswell."

"Roswell is the greatest myth of modern ufology," Dr. Lara smiled. "It's helped hundreds of people to make a little money and ultimately portrays the military coverup and its consequences. It's the best example of a conspiracy made in the U.S.A."

We digressed to discuss Dr. Lara's favorite pastime--U.S. rules football, and his enthusiasm for the Pittsburgh Pirates. We ordered refreshments and continued the paranormal interview.

"Definitely--all governments, even economically modest one's like Mexico," he continued, "keep secrets, whether on psychic research, paranormal study, ufology, etc. Not to mention fields like genetics and molecular engineering. I've always maintained that in the future, power will not be in the hands of politicians or drug kingpins, but those of the genetic engineers."

"Genetic engineers." I mused. "You don't believe that genetic engineering is the purpose of the alien abductions, do you?"

Knotting his brow, Dr. Lara paused to collect his thoughts. "In Mexico, the abduction phenomenon can be said to be non-existent, since prominent local ufologists are only concerned in acquiring commercially profitable videotapes, rather than studying the ramifications of a thorny subject like UFO. Personally, I'm working on 16 cases involving people of all ages and different social strata who have *apparently* been abducted and experienced "missing time". I really cannot say what happened to them, and I've reached no conclusions to this date. Abduction research is in its infancy in this country."

Taking a sip of strong Mexican coffee, I pursued this new approach. "That's good to know. I was beginning to get the impression that abductions were taking place in the English-speaking world only! Do you think this is the case in Mexico only, or is it a widespread problem in Latin America?"

"The main problems that paranormal research is facing at the end of the century are sensationalism, yellow journalism, the thirst for profit on the part of pseudo-researchers, outright lying, and the New Age movement. It's simply inconceivable to try to "meld" --if that's the correct term--crystals, candles, aromatherapy and metaphysics with UFO and paranormal research. I think we'll witness, in the next century, a fusion of the basic sciences--mathematics, physics, chemistry, genetics--into a new discipline capable of explaining some of the manifestations of so-called paranomna."

"What about your own personal experiences? Have you ever seen anything you couldn't explain?"

"I've had a few," he replied. "Once, in 1974, as I was getting ready for an analytical geometry exam in high-school at the house of a friend--a structure reputed to be haunted. Well, on the night of February 25th of that year, the lights started going on and off, the doors and windows moved of their own accord, there were gusts of cold air, footsteps, etc. Another was in the early '90s, while researching a poltergeist in the town of Perote, not far from Jalapa. The account appeared in the defunct SAMIZDAT bulletin, if you remember."

"I most certainly do. Is the field improving or deteriorating, from your point of view?"

"Researchers should be more honest with themselves and with their subject. There are too many hoaxers, con-men and profiteers who are manipulating the field and proclaiming themselves as bearers of the truth. Paranormal research will have to focus on human phenomena as well as the nature surrounding it. I know it's naive, but I wish it were possible to depend less and less on the Internet!"

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